Concern over missing links in North-South corridor Highway project

DR. K. MALAISAMY (Tamil Nadu) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, my Special Mention relates to some missing links in North-South Corridor Project.

Sir, while the entire country has been extremely elated to hear that the National Highways roads from Kashmir to Kanyakumari on the North to South on the one side and on the East to West on the other are being widened, developed, improved and converted into four-lane traffic roads, it is a matter of great regret to the slow pace in planning, preparing and performing in executing the works besides neglect of priority. It is more so in Tamil Nadu. To illustrate, I may point out that the major important-felt need stretch, namely, Salem-Kanur-Dindigul-Madurai-Nellai-Kanyakumari is yet to start even the preliminaries, resulting in denial of benefits for the Southern districts in Tamil Nadu.

Coming to another most important aspect of North-South Corridor project, the four-lane traffic road between Chennai-Trichy has been in existence already. But beyond Trichy to Madurai, there are two routes, namely, Trichy-Madurai *via* Dindigul and another Trichy to Madurai *via* Viralimalai, Melur.

Both the routes are the National Highways, but the latter route is shorter by twenty-three kilometres which saves substantial time, with the result that most of the people are predominantly using Trichy-Madurai *via* Melur, and they do not prefer to go *via* Dindigul. Therefore, it is prudent and useful to convert this stretch, namely, Trichy to Madurai *via* Melur into a four-lane traffic road, which may serve the purpose eminently.

Therefore, may I appeal to the hon. Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways to consider and take up the stretch in question under the North-South Corridor Project?

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Status of implementation of recommendations contained in the sixty-sixth report of parliamentary standing committee on commerce

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): Sir, I am making this Statement on the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Sixty-sixth Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce on the direction of the hon. Chairman, Rajya Sabha, in pursuance of the

provisions of Rule 266 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States issued *vide* Rajya Sabha Bulletin-Part II dated September 28,2004.

The Standing Committee on Commerce examined the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion for the year 2004-05 and presented their Sixty-sixth Report in this regard to the Rajya Sabha on the 18th August, 2004 and the same was laid in the Lok Sabha on 18th August, 2004. The Report contains twenty recommendations. The recommendations of the said Committee mainly relate to increasing allocations at the RE 2004-05 stage for Indian Leather Development Programme and Growth Centres; timely approval of the major Plan programme of Technology Upgradation and Indian Leather Development Programme; early decision on the fate of Tariff Commission; close interfacing of Central Manufacturing Technology Institute (CMTI) with industry and specialized institutions like CSIR and Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) for R&D activities; complete utilization of funds by Indian Rubber Manufacturers Research Association (IRMRA); increased allocation of funds to National Institute of Design (NID), National Productivity Council (NPC), Development Council for Cement Industry and Transport subsidy; full support for speedy modernisation and strengthening of Patent and Trade Mark Offices and strengthening of Trade Mark Registry; effective utilization of funds by Quality Council of India (QCI); in-built mechanism for timely utilization of funds by National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM); to collaborate with National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Nagpur for development of environment friendly fireworks; implementation and monitoring of Industrial Infrastructure Upgradation Scheme; early clearance of scheme on technology modernization and proper planning of schemes.

All the twenty recommendations of the Committee have been considered in the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. The action as recommended by the Committee has either already been taken or has been initiated. The Action Taken Replies on these recommendations have also been sent to the Committee.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jairam Ramesh, would you like to say something?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I would like to submit that it is impossible to make out from this Statement what exactly is the action taken. Just making a grand statement that action as

recommended by the Committee has either already been taken or has been initiated won't help. Sir, they are very important recommendations relating to the Leather Development Programme, the modernisation and strengthening of Patent and Trademark Offices, etc. I would like the hon. Minister to be a little more specific in saying what is the increased allocation for 2004-05 and 2005-06 for some of these programmes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, would you like to reply?

SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN: Sir, I shall send a detailed report on this to the hon. Member.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you satisfied, Mr. Jairam Ramesh?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, this is not a personal matter; this is for the House...*(Interruptions)...* We have had a discussion on similar action taken reports in the past. And if you would recall, Sir, the Minister of Agriculture had laid a detailed Statement on the Table of the House, showing in three columns the recommendations, the action taken...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think that is a good suggestion and the Ministry would submit a more detailed report next time. That would be better. It would enable all the hon. Members to understand it better.

SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN: Okay, Sir.

MR. JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, I think that there should be a uniform format. The details should be circulated to all the Members in a proper format. The format may contain details such as the recommendations, the action taken, action still remaining to be taken, and so on. These types of statements don't add any value to us.

DR. M.S. GILL (Punjab): I also want to endorse what Shri Jairam Ramesh has said. This piece of paper, frankly tells nothing, and says nothing. We do not know, what the recommendation was; we do not know how seriously it is being taken, and we do not know what is the end. They should take Parliament into confidence. Instead, at the end, they say that 'we have taken action, and our report has been sent to the Committee.' I think, Parliament is slightly above the Committee. They should lay an intelligent piece of paper of two three pages, of what has been done. They may not agree with everything that the Committee had suggested. That too can be accepted by Parliament. But, at least, some intelligent & comprehensive reply should be there. Otherwise, it is just a *khanapuri.*

SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN: As the hon. Member said, it is not just a piece of paper. It contains two or three pages. Definitely, I will give a detailed reply.

. MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What the hon. Member is saying is, as to what are the recommendations you accepted and what are the recommendations you have sent to the Standing Committee, you can circulate the same to the hon. Member.

Now, we take up the Appropriation (Railways) NO. 2 Bill, 2005.

GOVERNMENT BILL

I. The Appropriation (Railways) No. 2 Bill, 2005 Govt. Resolution approving recommendations contained in first report of Railway Convention Committee (2004)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): Sir, I beg to move:

> 'That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2005-2006 for the purposes of Railways, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, I also beg to move:-

> 'That this House approves the recommendations contained in Paras 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 53 of the First Report of the Railway Convention Committee (2004) appointed to review the rate of dividend payable by the Railway Undertaking to General Revenues etc., which was laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on the 21 st December, 2004."

The questions were proposed

SHRI P.G NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that Tamil Nadu has the lowest component of broad gauge lines in India. The State had no Railway Ministers since hon. Mr. Velu became one last year. The State was neglected in terms of railway projects for the past several decades. Hence, there is an urgent need to improve the situation. Sir, I am told that this year about 300 Kms. of meter gauge lines in Tamil Nadu will be converted to broad gauge. I submit that the Railways should step up the gauge conversion capacity from the present 300 Kms. per year to, at